Appendix: General Design Guidelines

Note: district-specific project criteria supersede these general criteria where they differ

Building form

- **Placement on site** Building facades should typically be located at or near the sidewalk to promote strong relationships of scale, access and visual connection between buildings and pedestrians, and to shape public street corridors and plazas as distinct volumes.
  - Building facades with ground floor commercial and civic uses should be located at the property line, or set back up to 15 feet from the property line if the setback accommodates paved sidewalk area for outdoor dining or similar public activity. Upper floors of these buildings may be stepped back up to 15 feet from the ground floor façade to augment the privacy of upper floor dwelling units and/or exterior balconies/decks.
  - Building facades with ground-floor residential uses should be set back 5 to 15 feet from the property line behind a landscaped area.
  - Facades of adjacent buildings should typically meet a common build-to line unless ground floor use changes among commercial, civic (including religious) and/or residential.
  - Exceptions:
    - In all cases, building facades may be aligned with existing buildings of two or more stories.
    - Courtyards facing streets may exceed 15 feet in depth (perpendicular to street) if they are surrounded by building facades on three sides, do not exceed 100 feet in width (parallel to street), and represent a distinct, isolated condition relative to a well-defined and predominant build-to line.
- **Massing and height**
  - Buildings should not have fewer than two stories.
  - Building form should reinforce view corridors to/along the Arkansas River wherever possible. Create architectural landmarks in new buildings that terminate significant vistas, and frame view corridors with consistent façade lines.
  - Buildings that exceed five stories and/or fall within an historic environs that impacts height should step-back the façade of upper floors from the façade that meets the ground, at a height that relates to the scale of adjacent buildings (and/or the historic building(s) where applicable) and that is no higher than five stories.
  - Facades should include horizontal lines of expression (such as string courses, cornices, window alignments and step-backs) that correspond to the height of adjacent context buildings.

- Building tops and other skyline elements that rise above context buildings deserve special attention as prominent elements in the public realm.
- Penthouses, stacks, grilles and other building service elements at roof level should either be screened or else fully integrated into the overall building form in way that contributes to it.

- **Ground floor transparency and retail accommodation** The retail land use diagram in Chapter 5 identifies corridors along which buildings should be designed to accommodate retail, entertainment or dining uses. Some portions of these corridors are immediate priority areas for retail, while others (longer-term priority areas) should provide for the possibility of future supplementary retail. Ground floor facades along these corridors should meet these criteria:
  - At least 70% of ground floor façade area in priority retail areas, and at least 50% of ground floor façade area in supplementary retail areas, should consist of transparent glazing.
  - Opaque façade areas should extend no more than 20 feet horizontally.
  - The façade architecture should incorporate a horizontal break that distinguishes the ground floor from upper floors and accommodates a horizontal signage zone above ground floor glazing.
  - Floor-to-floor height should measure 15 to 20 feet
  - Leasable ground floor retail space should average at least 60 feet in depth from the façade, with 80 feet preferable.
  - The ground floor should be flush with the sidewalk
  - Interior power, HVAC and other key services should be zoned to allow convenient sublease of ground floor retail spaces
  - In supplementary retail areas, ground level uses should follow this order of priority:
    1. Retail
    2. Community uses open to the public such as daycare center, health services, religious uses, arts organizations
    3. Work/live or live/work spaces preferably with restrictions against reversion to pure residential use
    4. Building lobbies and interior gathering spaces such as meeting rooms
    5. Conventional office space
  - The design of signage, awnings, storefronts, window displays and other elements defining retail presence should reinforce local neighborhood and district character. To this end, prominent use of corporate logos is discouraged. Signage font, scale, material and other characteristics should primarily reflect cues from the local setting – such as the architectural style of their own and adjacent buildings, themes established among local merchants, and public realm signage and public art reinforcing community identity – instead of conventional corporate signage and logo practice. Signage should be especially oriented to pedestrians, such as through use of signs suspended over the sidewalk.

- **Articulation of scale and proportion** Building facades should be composed using a "base/middle/top" format that defines three major zones from base to top of the building façade. In addition, to prevent a monolithic appearance and promote good scale relationships to a variety of context elements from people to whole street blocks, a façade should incorporate modules at a hierarchy of scales. In particular, these modules should all be represented:
    - Building Bays, 42' to 64' in horizontal length (or other dimension best matching context) and extending vertically at least three stories. Building bays relate to the scale of traditional residential building sections and overall street widths.
    - Unit Bays, 22' to 36' in horizontal length and extending vertically at least three stories. Primary bays relate to the scale of whole apartment units, street trees and street pavement widths.
    - Room Bays, 10' to 16' in horizontal length and extending vertically at least one and one-half stories. Secondary bays relate to the scale of individual residential rooms, building entrances and sidewalk widths.
    - Opening Bays, 3' to 6' in horizontal length and extending vertically at least 1.4 times horizontal length. Window bays relate to the scale of typical building windows, doors, projecting bays and the human body.
    - Detail Elements, of variable dimensions, but enclosing an area of approximately one square foot. Detail units relate to the scale of individual building-material units such as bricks and shingles, as well as light fixtures, vegetation, and elements of the human body.
    - In general, these scale modules should be used to emphasize vertical proportions in overall building massing. The unbroken horizontal length of any façade plane should not exceed 1.75 times the façade height (at eave). Intervals of set-back or projected façade area, preferably finished with a contrasting material, may be used to permit longer building lengths
- **Materials** Building design should emphasize use of stone, masonry, metal, glass, concrete and/or other high-quality, durable finishes.
    - Wood and materials resembling wood should not be the predominant façade materials on any structures. Wood and materials resembling wood should only be used on secondary facades of residential structures of three or fewer stories.
    - Consider using glazing generously as a functional and expressive means of connecting building occupants to their environment. However, use no reflective or darkly tinted glass.
    - Incorporate a variety of materials, in counterpoint to the elements of formal continuity that are defined from block to block. Any single material should make up no more than 80% of wall area other than glazing on each building façade; at least one secondary material should make up the difference.
    - Secondary facades (those not facing public streets, parks and plazas) may differ in finish materials from primary facades but should adhere to all other design guidelines provisions and should be of similar quality to primary facades. At semi-private

courtyards, it is strongly encouraged that façade materials match those of the primary façade(s).

- Construction joints, where they do not directly contribute to façade composition, should be obscured by locating them at changes in facade plane or material, such as along projecting string courses or bays, and through use of inconspicuous joint filler material.
- Use metal, slate or other high-quality roofing on sloped roofs. Asphalt shingles should not be used for roof areas exposed to public view. Occupied terraces are encouraged on flat roof areas, incorporating high-quality construction providing long-term resistance to water infiltration. Green roofs are also encouraged on flat or gently sloped roofs to moderate the microclimate and help retain stormwater. Flat roof areas and parking decks that other taller buildings look down upon should be designed with comparable attention to appearance as would be given to a vertical façade. Place particular emphasis on screening parking from above. Wherever possible, incorporate a significant amount of vegetation in the form of an occupied roof terrace with planters, green roof, trellis or other format. Consider opportunities to include solar panels and solar shading devices.
- Locate heavier materials closer to the ground and highest-quality materials and details at pedestrian level.
- Integrate HVAC and mechanical equipment unobtrusively into the overall building design.

- **Additional Guidance for Specific Building Types**
  - *Civic buildings,* such as major government facilities, churches, schools and recreation facilities, should strive to embody the noblest aspirations of their time through their architecture. Civic buildings should stand out from all others by undisguised building mass, prominent location, scale and presence of unique ornament. Civic buildings should not necessarily imitate the architectural scale of their built context; rather, it may be especially appropriate for them to stand out distinctly from the prevailing scale as community landmarks. Civic buildings in and adjacent to the Arkansas River district deserve particular attention to design quality to continue the tradition of high quality architecture in this area. Holding an international architectural design competition for the planned new library, potential convention center improvements, and/or other new buildings in this area is strongly recommended.
  - In *multifamily residential buildings,* ground floor units should have direct entrances from the public street wherever possible.
  - *Office and hotel buildings* deserve high-quality design expression, particularly on prominent sites along and near Douglas Avenue, Main Street and the Arkansas River. This is also true of *residential buildings* on prominent sites along the Arkansas River amidst other prominent civic and/or commercial buildings. Their architecture should emphasize a distinction from historic and other traditional architecture in the planning area and thus heighten the prominence of each style or era represented. At the same time, it is essential that these buildings exhibit the range of scales, architectural compatibility with context, and other design standards expected of all buildings downtown.

- **Off-street parking**
  - **Parking ratios** Meet the use-based needs for off-street parking in ways that maximize space- and cost-efficiency.
    - Development densities shown in the vision plan would require structured parking to accommodate most parking demand, with surface parking possible on some lower-density blocks, particularly in the Commerce Street Arts District, Renaissance Square District and Old Town West District to promote affordability.
    - Shared use of parking facilities by uses with different peak demand times is encouraged wherever possible as per the Parking framework outlined in Chapter 5. Uses and parking facilities should be located and managed to facilitate this sharing. The intended mixed-use development approach fully supports this. While ownership housing units often must have dedicated parking spaces to be market-competitive, rental units commonly may share spaces with other uses such as retail, office, hotel and civic/religious. For planning purposes, aggregate parking space needs among compatible uses sharing parking have been assumed to be up to 30% lower than the sum of individual demands per use.
    - To the extent the market allows, dwelling units should be provided with a minimum number of parking spaces (i.e. one) as part of the base unit price, with additional parking space(s) available for an additional fee. This improves parking efficiency by making residents aware of the costs of additional parking, and provides residents a choice of whether they want to incur these costs or not.
    - Utilize public on-street parking wherever possible to reduce off-street parking needs. Parking spaces should be parallel to the street, except in core retail areas where diagonal parking is acceptable as space allows.
    - Development must continue to accommodate the parking needs of existing uses.
    - The vision plan assumes the following parking ratios for principal uses downtown. These ratios, or refinements of them, should be imposed as maximum parking ratios, instead of minimums, to encourage efficient provision of parking, and design and use that favor access by foot, transit and bicycle as much as possible.
      - Retail: 3.5 parking spaces per 1,000gsf
      - Office: 3 parking spaces per 1,000gsf
      - Residential: 1.5 parking spaces per dwelling unit
      - Hotel: 1.1 spaces per room
      - Civic buildings, churches and other institutional buildings: typical parking demand patterns as of the adoption of this plan.
  - **Placement and design** Off-street parking should be located and designed to have minimal presence, if any, along streets and other public spaces. Surface or structured parking should not be located along a street edge, except as a temporary condition on

blocks to be developed in later phases. Upper levels of parking structures should also be screened from public spaces wherever possible. Any portions of parking structures visible from the street should follow the building form guidelines outlined above.

- **Pedestrian access** should be prominent, inviting and convenient, making it easy to park once and reach multiple destinations on foot. Pedestrian entrance lobbies to parking structures should have as much visibility from the exterior as possible to promote security. Stair towers and elevators, where adjacent to the street, should be designed with a high degree of transparency. Consider making use of their potential as a strong vertical design element.

Streetscape

- **Street trees** All streets should be lined with street trees.
  - **Retain existing trees wherever possible** through design and construction of street improvements and buildings that takes care to avoid disturbing them. Existing mature street trees are very important assets. The cost, risk of death, and long growing period to maturity of new street trees mean that every existing tree saved represents a great value.
  - **Ensure a continuous canopy** along sidewalks by spacing new trees every 30 to 50 feet, or other distance as appropriate to species, on both sides of the street.
  - **Reinforce the distinct character of districts** within the overall planning area with an appropriate tree-planting plan for each. Highlight special places with particular species, planting layouts, or other features that contrast with prevailing species or layouts in adjacent areas.
  - Select trees according to desired **visibility and privacy.** Along mixed-use streets, select trees that allow good visibility of ground-floor uses beneath branches and do not overly obscure signage. Next to residential development, select and locate trees to balance desires for residential privacy and for maintenance of prime views.
  - **Select trees that best tolerate the stresses of urban locations,** including air pollution, physical contact, and limited groundwater access. Use only species approved by the City of Wichita. Match mature-tree size and shape to building heights and volumes on adjacent parcels.
  - **Locate trunk centerlines** at least 4 feet from the face of the street curb to prevent contact from vehicles in travel or parking lanes.
  - **Provide ample soil area and groundwater access** to ensure long-term survival of trees. Plant trees in extended planting strips wherever possible to maximize opportunity for rainwater infiltration to roots.
- **Planting strips and tree wells** Create planting strips wherever possible along streets to serve multiple functions:
  - **Reinforce separation of sidewalk and residential uses from traffic** through the use of planting strips of at least 4 feet wide that can accommodate trees, lawn and/or ornamental plantings up to three feet tall.

- **Create continuous permeable areas between sidewalks and curbs** where stormwater can filter into the ground, promoting the health of street trees and other vegetation, restoring groundwater, and reducing demand on storm sewer systems and impact on water-ways. Individual unit pavers may be placed across planting strips at periodic intervals to facilitate access to on-street parking.
- **Where tree wells are provided,** observe the following:
  - Tree wells should be a minimum of 5' x 5' or 25 square feet for new development. Using larger tree wells of 40 square feet or larger is encouraged to promote greater tree longevity and size. New development should provide contiguous tree trenches to provide maximum soil area for roots to spread and water and air to penetrate.
  - Provide irrigation (captured from stormwater instead of municipal supply wherever possible) to ensure adequate water to establish and maintain trees.
  - Tree wells should be flush with the sidewalk pavement and should be planted with groundcover.
  - Expect residents and business and property owners to **maintain the planting strips** in front of their property.

- **Medians** Include planted medians in the street section of Douglas where possible, and maintain those along McLean.
  - **Accommodate median trees wherever possible** by providing at least 9 feet of soil between inside median curb edges (typically resulting in 10 feet of width between outside curb edges) to give trees adequate separation from traffic and create pervious ground through which rainwater can reach their roots.
  - **Include flowering plants, grasses, shrubs, and other plantings** up to two feet tall, whether or not trees are present. Choose plants that require little or no maintenance, tolerate traffic conditions, and are native or otherwise well suited to the climate.
  - **Provide supplementary irrigation** as needed.
  - Consider opportunities for medians that can **accommodate ground infiltration of stormwater** from road runoff.
- **Retaining walls** Where retaining walls are necessary to accommodate elevation changes, provide a level of finish quality better than plain concrete. Consider adding granite facing, art installations or similar design accents to add interest and help relate the form and finish of the wall to the surrounding landscape.
- **Transit shelters** Use bus shelters that are attractive and, where possible, unique to a district or activity center, to celebrate transit as a public amenity; clearly identify stops; provide service information; make waiting convenient; and reinforce place identity.
- **Benches** Provide benches in sidewalk or plaza areas indicated for high levels of pedestrian use, parks, near pedestrian-oriented retail, and any other places that facilitate public gathering. Provide at least two benches per block face in priority retail or open space areas, and at least one per block face otherwise. Choose durable benches approved by the City and locate them out of the main sidewalk passage area

- **Bike racks** To encourage and facilitate biking as a means of transportation, bike racks approved by the City should be provided:
  - Place bike racks with capacity for at least four bikes in at least two locations per block face in priority retail or open space areas, and at least one location per block face otherwise. Ensure racks are in convenient, safe, well-lit, paved areas outside of sidewalk walking areas
  - Place bike racks in parking garages and at other concentrations of public parking
  - Provide weather protection over bike racks where possible
- **Trash Receptacles** Trash receptacles approved by the City should be provided, generally located near the curb. One trash receptacle should be located at each intersection. Two additional trash receptacles should be located mid-block on streets with retail frontage.
- **Bollards** Bollards approved by the City may be used as traffic control and safety/protection devices. Decorative bollards should be used in high-visibility areas, where bollards are required and approved during site review. Simple bollards may be used in less visible areas that require protection from automobiles, such as building walls at service and parking entrances. Simple bollards should consist of a round concrete-filled metal post with a concrete cap, painted in one color to match the building architecture.
- **Lighting**
  - Street lighting should include City-approved fixtures specifically scaled to pedestrian environments as opposed to vehicular travel, at priority areas for retail and public open space.
  - Integrate lighting with poles for traffic signals, signage, and other elements out of the main sidewalk passage area as feasible to minimize the number and variety of poles in sidewalks.
  - Consider using lighting of unique design, color, or other quality at special places in the neighborhood.
  - Consider energy-saving fixtures that are powered by sunlight or wind.
  - Place street lights to avoid conflict with street trees.
  - Where located next to residential uses, streetlights should include house-side shields as needed to prevent lighting from directly entering residential windows.

Pedestrian infrastructure

- **Connectivity**
  - **Provide continuous pedestrian connections** between areas of new and existing development. Most existing streets downtown do have existing sidewalks and crosswalks, an important asset. Improve these facilities where needed to meet standards outlined below, and install new sidewalks and crosswalks to expand the network of walkable streets within and beyond downtown. Improve walking connections between riverside multi-use paths and nearby streets and bridges. Retain

existing streets; closure of street segments is strongly discouraged. Add pedestrian routes across large blocks (with lengths exceeding 400 to 500 feet) where possible.

- **Prioritize pedestrian convenience and safety** at crosswalks along major walking routes, such as Douglas and McLean.
- **As parcels are redeveloped,** invest in needed sidewalk, tree and landscaping improvements adjacent to their property.

- **Sidewalks**
  - **Width:** Provide at least 8 feet of continuous clear width for walking along retail or other active building frontage; at least 6 feet along multifamily residential buildings; and at least 5 feet along single-family houses. Provide additional width for bus shelters and other transit facilities, bike racks, and for outdoor seating and/or sales areas in front of restaurant and retail uses that support such functions.
  - **Protection from traffic:** Provide at least a planting strip, preferably 4 feet or more in width, and on-street parking as well, wherever possible. In planting strips, include street trees where width allows; in other areas, provide shrubs or other plants up to three feet tall. Along retail or in other areas where pedestrian activity would degrade a planting strip, additional sidewalk paving may be substituted for planted area, with trees set in tree wells.
- **Crosswalks**
  - **Crosswalks at priority areas** for retail and public open space, and primary pedestrian crossings of perimeter streets, will have particular prominence and pedestrian volume. Those crosswalks should receive priority for installation of masonry pavers or similar enhanced surface materials, and added width and crossing time.
  - **Provide pedestrian signals** that display a numeric countdown of remaining crossing time and have audible indications of phase. At crosswalks that experience regular use, evaluate the idea of eliminating pedestrian signal buttons in favor of a standard pedestrian crossing phase that runs concurrently with parallel traffic. At crosswalks that experience occasional use, consider providing a signal-actuation button that provides a clear signal in a prompt timeframe. Existing crosswalk signals often require pedestrians to wait an unreasonably long time for a clear signal, encouraging jaywalking.
  - **Clearly distinguish the crosswalk from adjacent traffic paving.** White painted markings, preferably striped parallel or at an angle to travel lanes, do this effectively. Where additional prominence is desired, raising the crosswalk on a gentle rise or “traffic table” very effectively cues drivers to the presence of pedestrians. Special paving may also be considered. Use masonry pavers only if they can be installed and maintained well enough to retain a smooth surface Add white-painted edge lines where existing pavers do not stand out clearly from traffic lane pavement. Markings impregnated in asphalt offer a functional alternative. In all cases, regular maintenance, at least annually, is important to maintaining markings and surface quality.
  - **Make each crosswalk at least as wide as the widest sidewalk approaching it.** Provide accessible curb cuts linking crosswalks to sidewalks.

- At intersections where a median is present, **provide a median refuge for pedestrians** at least 4 feet wide and preferably 6 feet wide (measured across the roadway).

- **Paving**
  - **Maintain smooth paving** surfaces with level changes not exceeding ¼ inch. This standard facilitates ease and safety of access by people in wheelchairs or with other mobility constraints, as well as those on foot.
  - **Maintaining this standard with bricks or other masonry pavers can be difficult,** even when bricks are embedded in a concrete base. For this reason, if pavers are desired, consider using them as an accent and combining them with a continuous concrete sidewalk at least four feet wide. Concrete sidewalks can be visually accented where desired with score lines and integral coloring. Sidewalk and crosswalk areas at priority areas for retail and public open space, and priority pedestrian crossings of perimeter streets, are intended to mark prominent areas of high pedestrian traffic that deserve special attention to pedestrian convenience, safety and investment in quality materials. In other areas, give priority to basic connectivity over special aesthetic treatments.

- **Safety and wayfinding considerations for isolated areas** Certain sidewalk segments passing below the elevated portion of Kellogg, along or the Arkansas River, and in larger park areas, may lack significant informal surveillance from buildings or traffic, particularly at night. Take special measures to enhance safety such as:
  - Installing pedestrian-scale wayfinding signage that makes destinations, routes and distances clear.
  - Installing continuous night lighting, using pedestrian-scaled light fixtures. For instance, use bracket- or pole-supported fixtures rather than standard commercial wall- or bridge-mounted fixtures.
  - Installing lighted call buttons notifying police in cases of emergency